ANNEX.

Shorthand Notes of a Meeting of the Committee held in Lord Curzon's Room at the Privy Council Office, on Monday, December 23, 1918, at 11·30 a.m.

THE FUTURE OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

LORD CURZON: The Committee has had circulated to it papers which, I am afraid, everybody has not had time to read, from the Foreign Office, written by Sir Eyre Crowe, from the War Office,† and from the Admiralty,‡ and two papers§ placed in our hands this morning from the India Office and the Foreign Secretary of the Government of India.‖ Perhaps it may help matters a little, and place our discussion in the proper focus, if, having read all these papers rather carefully, I preface our discussion by a brief statement on the lines of the statements that I have made here before.

We may start, I think, by two axiomatic propositions which nobody will be concerned to dispute. The first of these is the enormous strategical and political importance given to the Power that holds Constantinople. That is demonstrated by the historical argument in the paper of the General Staff; and one need only refer in a sentence to the two or three occasions in the past on which the possession of Constantinople has deflected the entire history of the world.

The first was when the Roman Empire moved to Byzantium, with its incalculable results on the fate not only of the Roman Empire, but of the whole Eastern world. The second was when the Turks, crossing the Bosphorus and establishing themselves in Constantinople, practically altered the history of mankind for the next five centuries. The third was the prodigious effect that has been exercised upon our own policy by the presence of the Turks in Constantinople, which was really the basis of the entire old Eastern policy of Great Britain. It was, in the main, because the Turk was at Constantinople that we fought the Crimean War. It was for the same reason that we interfered to tear up the Treaty of San Stefano. Indeed, up to the last twenty years, when Lord Salisbury first hazarded a doubt as to whether we had not put our money on the wrong horse, the whole orientation of our Eastern policy has been determined by the position of the Indian Empire at one end, and the position of the Turk astride of the Straits at the other.

I need not waste more time upon that.

The second axiomatic proposition is that the presence of the Turks in Europe has been a source of unmitigated evil to everybody concerned. I am not aware of a single interest, Turkish or otherwise, that during nearly 500 years has benefited by that presence. They have introduced a most distracting and demoralising influence into European politics. Their presence has, I think, been equally injurious to Islamism because of the pretensions and aspirations it has encouraged. It has been absolutely disastrous to the various subject races, both in Europe and in Asia, with whom they have had to deal. Indeed, the record is one of misrule, oppression, intrigue, and massacre, almost unparalleled in the history of the Eastern world.

Finally, the possession of the Straits has enabled the Turks, if we take only the case of this war, to exercise an influence altogether disproportionate to any position that they would otherwise occupy in the world. It was their presence in Constantinople and the fortification of the Straits that prevented Russia from obtaining an exit into the Mediterranean, that brought in the Balkan States in the earlier days of the war, that was responsible for our unfortunate failure—conceived on the soundest strategical lines as that venture was—at Gallipoli and the Dardanelles; and really the last four years are a convincing proof of the prodigious influence that the possession of the Straits and Constantinople enables the Power placed in that position to exercise, perhaps even more than before, under the conditions of modern warfare.

What are the factors we now have to deal with? We are discussing to-day what ought to be the fate of the territories of the Turk in Europe, of Constantinople and the area around it.

The population of Turkey in Europe at the beginning of the war was under two millions. I fancy, from such information as I have been enabled to procure, that it is not much more than a million and a half now. Contrast with this the population of Turkey in Asia. Take Asia Minor. I am giving the pre-war figures. No doubt they

* E.C.-2822. † E.C.-2824. ‡ E.C.-2823. § E.C.-2841.

‖ *Note by the Secretary.*—A Memorandum by Sir Louis Mallet, entitled, "Constantinople and Internationalization," was prepared and circulated to members of the Committee subsequent to the meeting (E.C.-2964).

are much reduced by the sufferings due to the war. The population of Asia Minor was ten millions, of Armenia and Kurdistan two and a half millions, of Mesopotamia two millions, of Syria three and a half millions, of Arabia one million. If we add together the whole of the last-named groups which are going to be taken from Turkey in any case, and which amount to nine millions, we leave in Asia Minor a population of ten millions for the Turk, as compared with the less than two millions that are still under his rule in Europe.

MR. BALFOUR: By "Turks" you mean Turkish subjects; you do not exclude Greeks?

LORD CURZON: I am including everybody for the moment. The exact proportions of the Greeks, Turks, Armenians, &c., in the whole area it is difficult to determine. When we come to Constantinople it is easier to determine the exact proportions. Constantinople, at the beginning of the war, was believed to have nearly one million of people. At the present moment I expect it has decidedly less than three quarters of a million. However, the actual total is immaterial. The proportions are important. From a comparison of the various tables of statistics that I have been able to refer to, I fancy that the following is about the truth, and it is very material in helping us to arrive at a decision. Out of every hundred people in Constantinople approximately forty are Turks, twenty are Greeks, nineteen are Armenians, fourteen are Jews and other foreigners, and the balance is made up by a floating residuum. Thus, you see, even in Constantinople itself, contrary to the belief, I believe, entertained by most people in this country, perhaps by some of us at this table, the Turks are not a majority of the population.

Those are the factors as regards population with which we have to deal.

To what extent are we committed with regard to Constantinople by anything that has been said by us or by our Allies during the war?

In the earlier days of the war, in March 1915, Mr. Asquith's Government entered into an engagement with the Russian Government, if the war was successful, to hand over to Russia not only Constantinople but a substantial strip of territory on both sides of the Straits. This strip of territory subtended not only the Bosphorus, but the Sea of Marmora and the Dardanelles, and it would have placed Russia not only in possession of the city itself, but of the whole of the approaches to and the exits therefrom. It is unnecessary for us to discuss here the wisdom or the policy of that act. I profoundly deplored it at the time, because I regarded it as fraught with great danger to the common cause, and even to Russia herself, who, I think, would have suffered irremediably had she been persuaded to come down from the North and embark on the wholly different sphere of politics which the possession of Byzantium would have opened out before her. That is, however, only a dictum of my own. Russia has disappeared from the scene, the arrangement has lapsed, and we need not spend more of our time in considering it.

The second stage was when, in January 1917, we drew up, in conference with our Allies in Downing Street, the famous declaration of our aims in reply to the American note. I forget the exact terms employed; but we did distinctly include in that statement the expulsion of the Turk from Europe. Slight apparent modifications of that attitude have been visible since. Our Prime Minister, in a speech which he made in January of the present year, used this language. He said that Great Britain did not challenge the maintenance of Turkey or of the Turks in the homeland of the Turkish race with its capital at Constantinople. Asia Minor is not the homeland of the Ottoman Turks. But without debating that point, still less is Turkey in Europe their homeland, and therefore when he spoke of the homeland with its capital, if he meant that the capital was in any way connected with the homeland, of course he was saying what was historically and ethnically inaccurate. What exactly he meant by his statement I do not recollect. I think that it was made at a moment when we were hoping to persuade the Turk to give in, and it was considered desirable to say something somewhat reassuring to him.

A little later, in fact only a month or so ago, Lord Robert Cecil (he will correct me if I am wrong) made a statement in the House of Commons, in which the words, as I have them here, were as follows. He said "A great deal is to be said for the ejection of the Turk from Constantinople; but do not forget that Constantinople is a predominantly Turkish capital."

LORD ROBERT CECIL: Yes.

LORD CURZON: Just before you came into the room I ventured to point out to the Committee that that was inaccurate, because, so far from it being a predominantly

Turkish capital, only 40 per cent. of the population are Turks themselves. Still they have nearly one-half.

LORD ROBERT CECIL: And of course they are very much larger than any other single element.

LORD CURZON: Yes; but they are only about equal to the Greeks and the Armenians.

LORD ROBERT CECIL: That is right.

LORD CURZON: And be it remembered that out of the population of Constantinople a large number, supposing that the Government were moved, would drift over to Asia with the Turks, because of the officials and their families who have collected there and battened upon the place for years, but who have no necessary connection with Constantinople itself.

I do not think, however, that in anything that has been said here there have been words which commit us irretrievably upon the matter, and even if they committed us they would not commit our Allies, and I imagine that Mr. Balfour would agree that at the Allied Conference when it meets at Paris we have really a perfectly free hand with our Allies to discuss the fate of Constantinople and to make such dispositions as the Congress of Europe may decide upon.

MR. MONTAGU: There is another quotation from the Prime Minister's speech. Will you give us that? It is quoted in Sir Eyre Crowe's paper. "We are not fighting to deprive Turkey of its capital."

LORD CURZON: I think that it is the same speech that I was referring to.

There seems to be presented to us, accordingly, if the Powers decide to take it, one of the great opportunities that have arisen in the history of the world. Assuming what I have said about the pernicious influence which has been exercised by the Turkish presence in Constantinople to be true, here at last is an occasion when it might be possible—I do not argue for the moment whether it is desirable—to cut out this canker which has poisoned the life of Europe. I expect that if we could look to the opinion of the civilised countries through the world they would be bitterly disappointed if, for reasons of political expediency or otherwise, the opportunity was not taken at any rate to consider most seriously the question of getting rid of this running sore for ever.

What are the solutions which are possible, which are open to us to consider? Upon certain points, I gather from the papers and indeed from the discussions in the press, everybody is agreed. Whether you keep the Turk there or whether you turn him out, there must be some kind of international guarantee for the future system that is to be set up at Constantinople and the surrounding territory. Secondly, the waterways—and by that I mean the Dardanelles, the Marmora, and the Bosphorus—must be absolutely free both for the merchant shipping and for the ships of war of all the Powers of all the world. Thirdly, the forts by which those narrow passages are defended must either be disarmed or razed to the ground. I believe those to be initial propositions upon which everybody is agreed.

Then we come to the much more difficult question, to whom is the government or control of this area to be given? I am assuming for the moment—I shall have to revert to this later—that the Turkish Government disappears from the scene and that some other Government is put into its place.

The ground may, at this stage, I think, be very quickly cleared. It must be obvious, I think, to everybody, that the custodian or the trustee cannot be one of the smaller or weaker Powers of Europe. Whatever claim Bulgaria may have had at any time at the commencement of the first Balkan war, when she seemed to be striding rapidly in the direction of Constantinople, and people talked about the Cross being placed again on the cupola of St. Sophia, and Bulgaria's secular ambitions seemed to have some chance of realisation, all that has now disappeared, and the treachery and the crimes of the Bulgarian people and Government during this war have effectively removed any chance that Bulgaria might have, quite apart from the fact that no other Balkan State would be willing to admit her.

The second small State that must be eliminated is Greece. We shall have difficulty enough in settling the home borders of Greece in her relations with her neighbours, without contemplating for a moment such a vast experiment as handing over to her the fate of Constantinople. Her own position, even if it were given to her, is not strong enough to enable her to hold it, at any rate, beyond quite a small length

of time. Her own shores would be separated from those of Constantinople, and as the War Office* has pointed out, in any struggle in the future those responsible for her existence would have of necessity the very onerous responsibility of defending the shores of Greece in different parts of the Mediterranean that are particularly difficult to protect. I think that we shall all agree, for other reasons as well, that I need not enter into here that Greece cannot be considered. No other small Power is worthy of a moment's attention.

Our next question is, Can it be a great European Power? Here we can proceed just as quickly by the method of exhaustion. Russia has forfeited her claim, and had disappeared from the scene. As to France and Italy, neither would agree for a moment to the appointment of the other; nor should we, I imagine, agree to either ourselves. I think that they must be wiped off the slate. I hope that the Committee do not think that I am dealing in a dogmatic or arbitrary way with this problem. I am merely trying by the brevity of my conclusions to save time. One could argue the case of Russia, or France, or Italy for ten minutes each.

The remaining great Power which is possible is Great Britain. I dare say that most of us, at the bottom of our hearts, think that Great Britain is the best qualified for the task, and could undertake it with the greatest advantage to the people themselves. A telegram came in only yesterday from Constantinople indicating that offers of that sort are not unlikely to be made to us by the Turks themselves. But I assume that we should agree that it is absolutely out of the question that we, with our vast burden, should—even if we were invited to do so either by the Turks themselves or by the League of Nations—assume the further responsibility of the future of Constantinople. If any opinions are entertained to the contrary, we could perfectly well argue it at this table; but I do not argue it now, because I assume it to be out of the question.

The smaller Powers and the greater Powers having thus been hypothetically eliminated, there remain two or three other alternatives.

One is that of a condominium, the policy that whenever mentioned is only mentioned to be rejected, but that sometimes has to be adopted as a *pis-aller* because no other can be found. International boards do exist for the control of the navigation of the Danube and other rivers. They have been tried in other parts of the world. The other day when we were talking about the Caucasus, as we explored the different possibilities of military occupation—British, French, and otherwise—it was Lord Robert Cecil, I think, who said: "Well, after all, we may have to come back to the idea of an international force," which we had all rejected. Therefore I suppose that it is not impossible, perhaps it is not unlikely, that in the case of Constantinople, if every Power—great or small—is rejected one after the other, some kind of international constitution may have to be set up in order to rule as well as it could (I am afraid that it would be very badly) the city and the adjacent areas. But I feel that it is quite unnecessary to explore that solution, because it is one, I imagine, to which the Powers would only be driven in the last resort.

The last suggestion is America, and from the evidence that has been put before us here we know, first, that America has been, through her missions and otherwise, warmly interested in Constantinople for a long time; and, secondly, that there exists a strong party in Constantinople, I believe the C.U.P. and their followers, who, largely for reasons of a selfish nature, are anxious to bring America in and make her the mandatory Power. I should say in passing that I think that they are much more concerned in doing that in order to save their own skins and to preserve the simulacrum of Turkish rule and authority in Europe than they are from any regard either for the interests of their own populations or from any sympathy with reform in the future. But let that pass. There is or there may be a decided movement to bring the Americans in. Whether America would accept the responsibility I do not know. In all our discussions during the past few weeks we have been proceeding upon the hypothesis that, having done so much to promote the scheme of a League of Nations, America will be almost bound, in honour as well as in logic, to take her share in bearing the responsibility. Whether that will carry her so far as to assume an obligation of this sort is a question on which I have always had very grave doubt myself, but which no doubt we shall see resolved in the course of the next few weeks. I do not therefore attempt to discuss the question whether America would be likely to accept the charge if it were offered to her.

An entirely different point is raised by the attitude of our naval authorities here, who think that the position of the Americans in any important post

* E.C.-2824.

in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean would be a source of naval danger to this country. They feel that, whatever arrangements were made in advance, whatever restrictions were imposed as regards military or naval strength, sooner or later America would acquire a navy, and that having acquired a navy she would require a naval base and naval stations, and so on, and that we should be admitting to European politics a new balance of naval power in Europe, a disturbing and possibly, in the long run, a maleficent influence. I can give no opinion on that. My opinion is worthless. I confess that I do not fully understand it. I do not understand why, if America were to assume such a responsibility as we are now discussing in Constantinople, or even Palestine or elsewhere, she must necessarily have a big fleet for the purpose, must necessarily have a naval base, and must necessarily embark upon a policy of competition with ourselves. The naval authorities no doubt will develop that point of view. I only, in passing, venture to say on my own account that I do not fully understand or appreciate the scale of the danger which they seem to put so high themselves.

These are the various candidates that have been named. Before we go further, it seems to me we have to consider, whoever is to be at Constantinople, the exact relations in which, be it America or be it a condominium, they are to be placed to the people themselves. Do you contemplate placing this power in Constantinople and leaving the Turks there? Do you contemplate leaving the Turkish population and eliminating the Turkish Government? Or do you contemplate leaving some form of Turkish government in Constantinople side by side with the mandatory Power that is exercising police functions in Constantinople and over the Straits? That really raises very big issues in international policy.

Those who feel very strongly that the opportunity ought not to be lost of getting rid of the Turk base their arguments upon what seem to me to be very powerful grounds indeed. They say that it is the presence of the Turks in Constantinople that during all these centuries has given the world the impression that Turkey is one of the great Powers of the world. Certainly their presence there has enabled Turkey to pose as a great European Power, and these pretensions would absolutely disappear if she were turned out of Turkey and removed to the other side of the Straits. Secondly, I imagine that her presence in Europe must have had an enormous effect in augmenting the prestige and power of Islam throughout the world, and in giving encouragement to the creed of Pan-Islam, about which we have heard so much in recent times.

Another point that the advocates of the expulsion of the Turk lay great stress upon—and it appeals to me very strongly—is this. Just as Byzantium in the old days of the Eastern Roman Empire was a sink of corruption and iniquity unparalleled in the ancient world, so undoubtedly is Constantinople to-day. Stambul in the hands of the Turks has been not only the hotbed of every sort of Eastern vice, but it has been the source from which the poison of corruption and intrigue has spread far and wide into Europe itself. The presence of the Turks at Constantinople has been an ulcer in the side of Europe. If we could get rid of them, if we could agree on the "bag and baggage" policy of Mr. Gladstone and remove them to the other side, we should all feel that a kind of miasma had disappeared from the atmosphere of Europe. Further, their removal would immensely encourage the progress of the Balkan communities to the bigger future that lies before them. If, on the other hand, Turkey remains in any capacity you will always feel that in the background the old system is struggling again into existence, the kind of thing that Abdul Hamid brought to perfection in the course of his long and bloodstained career, and which there is now a glorious opportunity of getting rid of for ever.

It is also to be remembered that if she goes it would probably be the very best thing that could happen to herself and to her own people. Those who know the Turk in his own highlands in Asia Minor and elsewhere always speak of him with respect as a simple-minded, worthy fellow, who dislikes as much as anybody else the system of corruption and intrigue that goes on at headquarters, who would much prefer living his own simple existence detached from Europe and all governing influences altogether.

Further, it is to be borne in mind that if Turkey were turned out of Europe she would lose the temptation to spend the enormous sums she has had to squander on maintaining an army and a navy, at any rate an army, to sustain the illusion that she is a great Power.

Lastly (this brings me rather into collision with the views that are put forward by Sir Hamilton Grant, of the Government of India), if the Turk were turned out of Europe it would settle, to my mind for all time, the question of the Khalifate. How has the Ottoman Sultan been able through all these centuries to hold the position of

Khalif? As is well known he is not of the Koreish family, and from the point of view of descent his claim to the spiritual supremacy is widely disputed in the Moslem world. He has been enabled to keep it, in the main, for two reasons: First, because he has been the custodian of the Holy Places, and secondly, because he has had Constantinople. The first has given him great spiritual distinction and authority over the Moslems all over the world. The second has enabled him to pose as the great Islamic Power. He has already lost the Holy Places. If he also loses Constantinople, it seems to me his chances of retaining the Khalifate are gone. What they may be if he remains there I do not know. I should think that they are doubtful. If he loses Constantinople I imagine that there can be very little doubt that the Mahommedan world will not accept as a Khalif a sovereign who has been dispossessed of Constantinople, Mecca, and Medina, and who has been driven back into the highlands of Asia.

I have stated what seem to be the reasons for getting rid of the Turk from Europe altogether. Now let us consider the reasons against.

First, we are told that it would outrage Mahommedan sentiment throughout the world. I very much wonder if that would be the case myself. This war has applied a wonderful test-stone to the solidarity of Islam, and as the various Powers who have been fighting the Turk, and so many of whom have large Turkish possessions of their own, whether they be in Africa or in Asia, successively came into the struggle, each was oppressed with the fear that all his Mahommedan subjects would dislike the fact that we were fighting the Turks so much that trouble and revolution might break out, and, in fact, that the Moslem world as a whole would be outraged at the idea of our being at war with the Turk. So far as I know those expectations have been falsified. When we come to India, about which Sir Hamilton Grant has put in a very powerful plea as to the feelings of the Indian Mahommedans and their great sense of outrage and indignity if the Turks were turned out of Constantinople, with all respect I do not agree the least in the world. I believe that the Moslem sentiment about Constantinople is one of purely modern creation. I do not believe that it existed fifty years ago.

It was largely the fuss we ourselves made about Turkey at the time of the Crimean War, and the fact that our policy was so much identified with that of Turkey, that first induced the Mahommedans of India to begin to look towards Constantinople, and to regard the Sultan as their spiritual chief. I was in India when the Turks were at war with Greece, and all sorts of apprehensions were expressed as to the possible attitude of the Moslems in India. They did not turn a hair. In the same way when the first and second Balkan wars took place, and Turkey was gradually being driven back, and Constantinople was at one time in danger. I do not say that anxiety was not expressed in India, but nothing serious took place. In this war, again, where the strain has been immeasurably greater upon Moslem sentiment than it ever has been before, is it not a most startling and remarkable fact that the Moslems of India have accepted the position with the loyalty and equanimity they have? If Sir Hamilton Grant refers, as he may do, to more recent manifestations, I would reply to him that the Nationalist Moslem movement in India is much more concerned in sympathising with the Young Turk because the Young Turk is anti-British than because he is a Moslem.

It is some years since I left India, and I speak with some diffidence on the matter. If I were asked, however, to give my opinion for what it is worth as to whether, if the Turk were turned out of Constantinople, there would be a great revulsion of feeling or any serious excitement in India, I should answer decidedly in the negative. I do not think that Pan-Islamism has any substantial hold in India at all.

Now, coming to the end, what I have said would indicate that, in my judgment, for what it is worth, the arguments in favour of seizing this opportunity of getting rid of the Turk altogether from Europe are predominant. That still leaves unsolved the question of whether there is to be a condominium, or whether we ought to have the Americans. Perhaps the authorities here, who are much better qualified than I am, would tell me what are the kinds of limitations that could be placed upon their exercise of authority. Would it be possible, if you put the Americans there (I am assuming that the Turks have gone), to place them there with a sort of municipal administration of Constantinople, with a force that would enable them to police the city and such surrounding districts as were left, with such naval force, again, as would enable them to patrol the waters of the Straits, with no fear of their thus creating a considerable force—in fact, to allow or invite the Americans simply to discharge the functions of preserving law and order, and conducting local administration within that area? I cannot myself see that that need necessarily be impossible; but it is not accepted in any of the papers, and therefore I venture merely to suggest the idea.

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There is the last suggestion of all, which is strongly favoured by the War Office in their paper, and which also, I gather, is the view of the Government of India, and that is to leave the Turk alone, internationalise the Straits, knock down the forts, leave the Sultan, leave the Seraglio, leave the Sublime Porte, leave all the venerable relics of the last five hundred years in Constantinople, deprive him of all real military power, and assume that, chastened by disaster and incapacitated by weakness, he will be a relatively respectable man in the future. That is a solution which the War Office recommend, and which, on grounds partly political and partly sentimental, a good many others favour. I confess that I am entirely against it. I do not believe in the regeneration of the Turk under any circumstances whatsoever. I think that once you leave the Turk in Europe as a governing force he will go on doing exactly the same as before. There will be a revival of the old intrigues, and he will presently begin his old game again of trying to set the Powers at loggerheads with each other and profiting by their squabbles.

Therefore, so far as I am competent to give an opinion, I am in favour of the clean cut; but in what I have said I have been more concerned with trying to do justice to the various views put forward than I have been to urge any individual opinions of my own.

MR. MONTAGU: I feel very strong dissent from your conclusion, and therefore perhaps you would not mind me, in a few words, stating the reasons of that dissent, because it seems to me that before we discuss who shall be the mandatory Power there, the first thing to decide is whether the Committee agrees with your very powerful argument for turning the Turk out, bag and baggage, or could be induced to agree with the argument I am going to put forward. The view of the military authorities and of the Admiralty is that the Turk should be left where he is. I would point out you did not seem enamoured of any of the resultant plans with which you dealt on the exclusion of the Turk. You "hypothetically" eliminated him, and the greater Powers and the smaller Powers, and you were then left either with a condominium, which you disliked, or with the United States, which the Admiralty dislikes, and which in our discussions at the Cabinet it was very clear that some of our colleagues very much disliked. I would suggest that, if there was no better reason, the fact that you cannot find a Power that you really like to replace the Turk would lead one to hesitate to remove the Turk in order to embark upon a scheme which may not be any more satisfactory than the Turk himself. I assume that we are all agreed on the internationalisation and the neutralisation of the Straits and Marmora. What are the reasons that you allege most strongly for removing the Turk? First of all you said that it was not the homeland of the Turk, and that the Prime Minister had been historically inaccurate in using that phrase. I think that it is the homeland of the Turk. The fact that he has only gone there to live of comparatively recent years does not prevent its being his home. You would be depriving the Turk of that country which is now his main home and of his capital at a time when you are depriving him of very large portions of his territory in Asia.

Is it not fair to state that many of the abuses, due to the existence of the Turk in Constantinople, are due to his control over the Straits, and to his rule of such countries as Armenia, which you are going to deprive him of? Is it not possible that Turkish rule in Constantinople would be much less intolerable when these great powers were removed from him?

I look at this much more from the point of view of the Indian Mahommedan. I would like to say a few words in amplification of what Sir Hamilton Grant has written on that subject. Do let us remember that, whether you could have conquered the Turk without the Indian Mahommedan or not, it was the Indian Mahommedan that conquered him. It is open to argument (it certainly has been argued in some of the more scurrilous Indian newspapers) that you failed to conquer the Turk when you did not use any large number of Indian troops, but that you did conquer him when Indian troops took up the burden of the work in Mesopotamia and in Palestine.

LORD CURZON: You say that we conquered him by the aid of the Mahommedan troops. Is that borne out by the figures? If you take the Indian forces fighting the Turk in Mesopotamia, Palestine, and elsewhere, do you mean to tell me that the larger proportion were Mahommedans?

MR. MONTAGU: The best of them would be Punjab Mahommedans. With the Indian Mahommedan the Turk was conquered. The best province for recruiting purposes during the war was the Punjab, which is wholly Mahommedan.

LORD CURZON: I think you are stating your case much too high. In a good many places we had to be careful about employing Mahommedans. Difficulties arose in Gallipoli, and difficulties arose in Mesopotamia. I would like to put in a caveat against accepting the proposition that we defeated the Turk by means of Mahommedans of India. They lent valuable assistance; but it was no more. The bulk of the fighting was done by non-Mahommedan races. That is my belief.

MR. MONTAGU: I base my argument upon the magnificent recruiting work: the staple part of the Indian army came from the Punjab, and was mainly Mahommedan. I quite agree that there was trouble in the earlier stages of the war with certain regiments because they were fighting the Turks, which shows that, despite the fact that they loyally assisted us in our war against the Turk, there was a terrific strain upon their loyalty. I view with horror the argument that because continuous strains have been put upon the loyalty of the Mahommedans, which they have magnificently withstood, therefore you are not to consider their views in the settlement of this question. The argument that people have threatened rebellion and outbreak if certain things were done which might put a strain upon the Mahommedan loyalty, but that that prophecy has not been fulfilled, is all the more reason why we should consider Mahommedan feeling. It is not really Constantinople that I am afraid of. It is the idea that this country has become an anti-Mahommedan State, which has led all through the Balkan wars, which you referred to, to the gradual downing of Mahommedanism and driving it eastward—the war of the Italians in Tripoli and the Balkan war. I was in India at the time, or just afterwards, and I remember the tremendous grief with which certain speeches of Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, and Mr. Winston Churchill were commented upon by the Indian newspapers as showing that this country was anti-Mahommedan. When you come to talk about the Khalifate and the extreme unlikeliness of the Sultan of Turkey remaining Khalif if he is turned out of Constantinople, I would say with great respect that we have solemnly declared that we are not going to interfere in any way with the free choice of Khalif, and therefore I do not think that we ought, even in privacy, to allow that argument to affect the decision in the least. We ought to stick to our declaration that we still express no opinion, whoever the Mahommedans choose to elect as their Khalif.

LORD CURZON: That does not prevent us from forecasting the possible consequences.

MR. MONTAGU: The last thing that I would say is this. If you remember, when His Majesty went to address Parliament and the representatives of the Dominions in the House of Lords, he referred to the rescue of Palestine for Christianity. There were several comments upon that at the time. We had used Mahommedan troops.

MR. BALFOUR: It was only the guardianship of the Holy Places, surely?

MR. MONTAGU: No, the question of Palestine.

MR. BALFOUR: No. I heard the speech. I am sure that I should have stood up with horror if I had understood that it was to be conquered from Arabs, and from Jews, and from Turks in order to turn it into a Christian country. I do not believe that that was ever suggested.

MR. MONTAGU: I cannot find it at the moment because I have not got it, but I am sure that my memory is accurate on the subject because it gave rise to so many representations to me, and it seemed to me to show how careful we ought to be.

Finally, I would remind you of this, the Prime Minister has appointed two representatives of India to take their share in the Imperial deliberations on Peace. By an accident it so happens that both these gentlemen are Hindus, and there is no Mahommedan representation directly accessible to me, and therefore it seemed to me that it behoves us to be all the more careful that Mahommedan interests are not forgotten. It does seem to me that Lord Curzon has shown us satisfactorily that there is no good solution by driving out the Turk, and that we are in a position to consider Mahommedan feeling which is so loyal and which is likely to remain loyal, and we have every reason to consider it in the solution.

MR. BALFOUR: I have no doubt that the question is one of extreme difficulty. As regards the particular objection raised by Mr. Montagu, I am not at all qualified to speak. I have no knowledge of Mahommedan sentiment in India, and it would be folly for me to offer an opinion on the subject. But I would like to make this observation.

Mr. Montagu seems to think that the process of driving the Turk eastward is on the whole rather fatal to British prestige in India; but the process of driving the Turk eastward is one which has been going on rapidly really for two centuries at least—more, I think. The Turk, as we all know, once occupied Hungary, Roumania, Serbia, and went up to the gates of Vienna. He had all the North of Africa, the islands of Greece, the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean. The whole process of history in that part of the world has been to steadily drive him back. If anybody would look at the map of the Turkish Empire as it was, let us say—I will take it at random—in 1650, and a map of what it is at the present time, he would have ocular demonstration of the fact. The question is, therefore, ought this process to be stopped at this last and critical stage? Ought not, in other words, an Oriental race go back to an Oriental country, and can we not quite truly say to the Mahommedan world, "We have no objection to Mahommedanism, but we do not think that Europe is the place for it?" However, it really turns upon this. That argument turns upon a knowledge of Indian feeling, about which I am a very poor authority. I believe, however, that it is true that you could leave the Turk in Europe and could leave him in possession of Constantinople, and yet preserve the waterways of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, and I do not think that it would require very large powers to do so, or any great force or any great cost of money. It would be under international guarantees. An authority rather in the nature perhaps of the Danube authority would have a certain police force. There would be no forts, there would be no fleet, there would be no means of taking the place by a *coup de main*, which would have the least chance of success, by the Turks. I do not think that the operation of keeping these waterways open is either very costly or very difficult, or in any way impracticable. That would leave the Turk with his powers at Constantinople somewhat shorn. It would leave the Sultan living there, if he chose to live there, with a control over the Christian populations of Turkey in Arabia. I personally am not, therefore, moved with the argument that it is a difficult thing to carry out, and I am not very much moved by the argument that it is a good thing to keep the Turk in Europe. My own views are that I should like to see him expelled, and I think this is a proper opportunity for expelling him; but I am not quite sure that anybody listening to Lord Curzon's able statement of the case would quite feel all the difficulty that I am moved by when I think of how this European population, a mixture of Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and odds and ends, is to be governed if the Turk goes. Lord Curzon says, I think with justice, that you could not give these regions to Bulgaria, neither do I believe that you could give them to Greece. Is it conceivable that the Americans would take over the government of a considerable area? As far as I understand it has a considerable population.

LORD CURZON: Is not the question partly dealt with in one of the Foreign Office papers, in which I read (it was news to me) that some sort of arrangement had been arrived at by M. Venizelos with the Governments of Roumania, Serbia, and our other Allies in that part of the world, by which the Greeks were to undertake the very responsibilities that you are speaking of, were to penetrate into Eastern Thrace, were to take the islands of the Marmora, were to occupy the territories belonging to the Turkish Government in which their population was numerically in the ascendant, and that that would be a partial solution of the difficulties you are putting?

MR. BALFOUR: They would have the parts of Eastern Thrace, but I do not think that they were to have all these territories. I never heard this.

LORD CURZON: The idea was that the Greeks are to get Gallipoli and Rodosto.

SIR EYRE CROWE: I think so, as far as I understood it.

MR. BALFOUR: I will not argue about that. I do not know where Sir Eyre Crowe gets this information. It has not come to me as far as I know. All that has come to me is that M. Venizelos with the Serbian Minister and the Roumanian Minister came and solemnly informed me that they saw their way to an arrangement that would satisfy all those three Balkan Powers: but they did not tell me what the arangement was, nor did they give me the smallest hint of what it was. So I am not qualified to speak on that.

LORD CURZON: I was only mentioning it as a partial answer to the question you were putting, "What is to become of the populations outside Constantinople?" To that I made the reply that some sort of arrangement appeared to be under discussion.